



**Australian Government**  
**Refugee Review Tribunal**

# **Background Paper**

## **Political Parties in India**

March 2012

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### **1. Introduction**

In the elections to the 15th Lok Sabha, India's directly elected lower house of parliament, held in April-May 2009, candidates came from 1,055 political parties. India's two main political parties, the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), led coalitions into the general election, the INC leading the United Progressive Alliance (UPA), and the BJP leading the National Democratic Alliance (NDA). A third major coalition named the Third Front, formed mainly of leftist parties including the Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) and the Communist Party of India (CPI), also contested the election. The UPA won 262 seats in the election, the NDA 158 seats, and the Third Front 76 seats. Following the election, the UPA gained the support of ten political parties previously either uncommitted or part of another coalition, and returned to parliament with an overall majority under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.<sup>1</sup>

Information is provided below on six national political parties and two state-based political parties that figure significantly in the MRT-RRT caseload.

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<sup>1</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, paragraphs 3.08-3.13

## 2. National Political Parties

### Indian National Congress – Congress (I) (INC)

**Election Symbol:** Hand<sup>2</sup>

Founded in 1885,<sup>3</sup> the centrist, secular Indian National Congress (INC) ruled at the federal level in India for nearly all of the first 50 years following India's gaining of independence in 1947.<sup>4</sup> Congress led the campaign for India's independence and is reported to have "remained a powerful force in Indian politics, transcending religious, ethnic and caste divisions. However, it is also a party tightly focused on its heritage: members of the Nehru-Gandhi family have led the party throughout most of its history."<sup>5</sup>

In 1969, the INC split into the ruling (Gandhi) and opposition factions, the latter subsequently designated the Congress (O) by the electoral commission. The Gandhi Congress was defeated at the 1977 election, and in January 1978, Gandhi loyalists organised separately as the Indian National Congress-Indira (INC-I), or the Congress (I). In 1980, Congress (I) gained a nearly two-thirds majority in the lower house, and by late 1982, the anti-Gandhi Congress had disintegrated. Congress (I) won the 1984 Lok Sabha election with Rajiv Gandhi as leader. It lost power in 1989, but formed a minority government with its allies in 1991 under the leadership of P. V. Narasimha Rao. The Rao government was defeated at the 1996 election, but after the collapse of the BJP government, Congress gave external support to a minority United Front administration. Congress won 141 seats in the 1998 election, emerging as the largest opposition formation. The party remained in opposition until it was unexpectedly re-elected in 2004.<sup>6</sup>

The 2004 national elections ended the BJP's governance and brought in a new left-leaning coalition government,<sup>7</sup> the Congress-led United Progressive Alliance (UPA) coalition under Prime Minister Manmohan Singh.<sup>8</sup> In the 2009 parliamentary election, the INC secured 206 of the 262 seats won by the UPA in the 543 seat lower house. The UPA returned to parliament with an overall majority after gaining the support of ten political parties previously either uncommitted or part of another coalition.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Election Commission of India 2011, 'Notification No. 56/2011/PPS-II', Election Commission of India website, 28 December  
[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification\\_symbol\\_29122011.pdf](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification_symbol_29122011.pdf) - Accessed 15 March 2012

<sup>3</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 628

<sup>4</sup> Freedom House 2011, 'Freedom in the World – India', Freedom House website  
<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2011&country=8055> – Accessed 6 July 2011

<sup>5</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Annex B

<sup>6</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at pp. 627-629

<sup>7</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Annex B

<sup>8</sup> Freedom House 2011, 'Freedom in the World – India', Freedom House website  
<http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2011&country=8055> – Accessed 6 July 2011

<sup>9</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, paragraphs 3.12-3.13

Leaders: Dr. Manmohan Singh (Prime Minister),<sup>10</sup> Sonia Gandhi (Party President), Motilal Vora (Treasurer), Ahmed Patel (Political Secretary)<sup>11</sup>

The Indian National Congress website is at <http://www.aicc.org.in/new/>

### **Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)**

**Election Symbol:** Lotus<sup>12</sup>

The Hindu nationalist Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)<sup>13</sup> traces its roots back to the Bharatiya Jan Sangh, a party that represented traditional Hindu values, small business, traders and the middle class.<sup>14</sup> The Bharatiya Jana Sangh was one of the parties that formed the national Janata (People's) Front in 1975. The Front subsequently converted into the Janata Party, which won government in India in 1977. Janata split in 1979, and the BJP was formed in April 1980 by the bulk of Janata's Jana Sangh group, which opposed the Janata leadership's efforts to ban party officeholders from participating in the activities of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), a secretive paramilitary Hindu communal group generally regarded as the BJP's parent organisation.<sup>15</sup>

By 1982, the BJP was widely regarded as the best-organised non-Communist opposition party. In 1989, the party won 88 seats in the Lok Sabha and supported a National Front government. The National Front had started as an opposition grouping in October 1987. In September 1990, L.K. Advani, the BJP's leader, began a religious pilgrimage to the site of an abandoned Muslim mosque in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh, where there had been serious ethnic unrest over Hindu efforts to construct a temple. Prime Minister Vishwanath Pratap Singh ordered Advani's arrest, and the BJP withdrew its support from the government.<sup>16</sup>

During the 1990s, the BJP "became a major factor in Parliament, leading a number of subsequent governments."<sup>17</sup> In the 1991 election, the BJP gained 119 seats, and it is reported that in the 1996 Lok Sabha election, its anti-Muslim populism helped it emerge as the plurality party with 161 seats. It formed a minority government under Atal Bihari Vajpayee, but the government resigned after 13 days rather than be

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<sup>10</sup> 'Prime Ministers of India' (undated), Prime Minister of India – Dr. Manmohan Singh website <http://pmindia.nic.in/pmsfindia.php> – Accessed 8 March 2012

<sup>11</sup> 'Office Bearers' (undated), Indian National Congress website <http://www.aicc.org.in/new/office-bearers.php> - Accessed 8 March 2012

<sup>12</sup> Election Commission of India 2011, 'Notification No. 56/2011/PPS-II', Election Commission of India website, 28 December [http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification\\_symbol\\_29122011.pdf](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification_symbol_29122011.pdf) - Accessed 15 March 2012

<sup>13</sup> Freedom House 2011, 'Freedom in the World – India', Freedom House website <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2011&country=8055> – Accessed 6 July 2011

<sup>14</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Annex B

<sup>15</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at pp. 628, 631

<sup>16</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at pp. 623, 631

<sup>17</sup> Freedom House 2011, 'Freedom in the World – India', Freedom House website <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2011&country=8055> – Accessed 6 July 2011

defeated in a confidence vote. The BJP tried to increase its support in 1997 by moderating its Hindu nationalist image and forging ties to other parties. In the 1998 election, it won 181 seats, and Vajpayee formed a governing coalition. In 1999, the party won 182 seats, and Vajpayee formed his third government.<sup>18</sup>

The BJP held power until 2004, when it was unexpectedly defeated after calling early national elections.<sup>19</sup> The party won only 22% of the vote and 137 seats.<sup>20</sup> The UPA formed government, with its victory “attributed to dissatisfaction among poorer rural voters that the prosperity of the cities had not filtered down to them, and rejection of the BJP’s Hindu nationalist agenda.”<sup>21</sup> In the 2009 Lok Sabha election, the BJP-led NDA won 158 seats, with the BJP winning 116 seats. The UPA won 262 seats and subsequently formed government.<sup>22</sup>

Leaders: Nitin Gadkari (President),<sup>23</sup> L.K. Advani (Chairman BJP Parliamentary Board),<sup>24</sup> Sushma Swaraj (Leader of the Opposition (Lok Sabha)),<sup>25</sup> Arun Jaitley (Leader of Opposition in the Rajya Sabha),<sup>26</sup> Atal Bihari Vajpayee (former Prime Minister),<sup>27</sup> Piyush Goyal (Treasurer)<sup>28</sup>

The BJP website is at <http://www.bjp.org/>

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<sup>18</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at pp. 631

<sup>19</sup> Freedom House 2011, ‘Freedom in the World – India’, Freedom House website <http://www.freedomhouse.org/template.cfm?page=22&year=2011&country=8055> – Accessed 6 July 2011

<sup>20</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 631

<sup>21</sup> US Department of State 2011, *Background Note: India*, 8 November <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/ei/bgn/3454.htm> – Accessed 28 February 2012

<sup>22</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, paragraphs 3.12-3.13

<sup>23</sup> ‘Office Bearers’ (undated), Bharatiya Janata Party website [http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=170&Itemid=481](http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=170&Itemid=481) – Accessed 8 March 2012

<sup>24</sup> ‘Shri L.K. Advani’ (undated), Bharatiya Janata Party website [http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=147&Itemid=463](http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=147&Itemid=463) – Accessed 8 March 2012

<sup>25</sup> ‘Speech by Smt. Sushma Swaraj on Price Rise’ 2011, Bharatiya Janata Party website, 8 December [http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=7468:speech-by-smt-sushma-swaraj-on-price-rise&catid=69:speeches&Itemid=495](http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7468:speech-by-smt-sushma-swaraj-on-price-rise&catid=69:speeches&Itemid=495) – Accessed 8 March 2012

<sup>26</sup> ‘Press statement on behalf of Bharatiya Janata Party’ 2012, Bharatiya Janata Party website, 6 March [http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=7732:press-statement-on-behalf-of-bharatiya-janata-party&catid=68:press-releases&Itemid=494](http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=7732:press-statement-on-behalf-of-bharatiya-janata-party&catid=68:press-releases&Itemid=494) – Accessed 8 March 2012

<sup>27</sup> ‘Word Portrait: Shri Atal Bihari Vajpayee’ (undated), Bharatiya Janata Party website [http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=144&Itemid=459](http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=144&Itemid=459) – Accessed 8 March 2012

<sup>28</sup> ‘Office Bearers’ (undated), Bharatiya Janata Party website [http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=170&Itemid=481](http://www.bjp.org/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=170&Itemid=481) – Accessed 8 March 2012

## **Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)**

**Election Symbol:** Elephant, except in the State of Assam, where its candidates choose another symbol from a list of free symbols specified by the Election Commission.<sup>29</sup>

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) was formed in 1980,<sup>30</sup> founded by Kanshi Ram, who died in October 2006.<sup>31</sup> The BSP's current president is Kumari Mayawati.<sup>32</sup> The party represents India's disadvantaged and Dalits, and is based in Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. It is reported to advance "no ideological program, save nonsecularism and 'power to the majority.'"<sup>33</sup> The BSP's website indicates that its ideology "is 'Social Transformation and Economic Emancipation' of the 'Bahujan Samaj', which comprises of the Scheduled Castes (SCs), the Scheduled Tribes (STs), the Other Backward Classes (OBCs) and Religious Minorities such as Sikhs, Muslims, Christians, Parsis and Buddhists and account for over 85 per cent of the country's total population."<sup>34</sup>

The BSP won 11 seats in the Lok Sabha in the 1996 national election, five seats in 1998, and 14 seats in 1999. In 2004, the party won 18 Lok Sabha seats in alliance with Congress. The BSP withdrew from the UPA in June 2008 over economic policy and Congress allegedly trying to obtain greater support from the BSP's voter base. The BSP's Mayawati also had an acknowledged ambition to be prime minister.<sup>35</sup> In the 2009 Lok Sabha election, the BSP won 21 seats as part of the Third Front coalition.<sup>36</sup> The party then gave external support to the Singh government.<sup>37</sup>

The BSP has also been in alliance with the BJP. In May 2002, it regained leadership of the Uttar Pradesh government in partnership with the BJP, but in August 2003, the coalition dissolved and Chief Minister Mayawati stepped down. Following the 2007 Uttar Pradesh election, Mayawati returned as chief minister after the BSP won an outright victory, taking a majority in the Legislative Assembly.<sup>38</sup> In Assembly

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<sup>29</sup> Election Commission of India 2011, 'Notification No. 56/2011/PPS-II', Election Commission of India website, 28 December

[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification\\_symbol\\_29122011.pdf](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification_symbol_29122011.pdf) - Accessed 15 March 2012

<sup>30</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Annex B

<sup>31</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>32</sup> 'Our President: Bahan Kumari Mayawati' (undated), Bahujan Samaj Party website

<http://www.bspindia.org/kumari-mayawati.php> - Accessed 9 March 2012

<sup>33</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>34</sup> 'Homepage' (undated), Bahujan Samaj Party website <http://bspindia.org/> - Accessed 14 February 2012

<sup>35</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>36</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, paragraph 3.12 & Annex B

<sup>37</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>38</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

elections held in Uttar Pradesh in March 2012, the BSP won only 80 of 403 seats, losing to the Samajwadi Party which obtained 224 seats.<sup>39</sup>

Leaders: Kumari Mayawati (President),<sup>40</sup> Satish Chandra Mishra (All India General Secretary),<sup>41</sup> Dr Suresh Mane (National General Secretary & Co-ordinator for the Southern and North East States of India)<sup>42</sup>

The BSP website is at <http://www.bspindia.org/>

**Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M))**  
**Election Symbol:** Hammer, Sickle and Star<sup>43</sup>

The Communist Party of India (Marxist) (CPI(M)) was formed in 1964 as a breakaway group of the Communist Party of India (CPI).<sup>44</sup> The CPI(M) favoured a more radical line, calling for small-scale, rural-oriented, labour-intensive development and political decentralisation.<sup>45</sup> The CPI(M) website indicates that the party “was born in the struggle against revisionism and sectarianism in the communist movement at the international and national level, in order to defend the scientific and revolutionary tenets of Marxism-Leninism and its appropriate application in the concrete Indian conditions.”<sup>46</sup> In 1969, some CPI(M) members withdrew from the party to form the CPI-ML.<sup>47</sup>

In the 1998 Lok Sabha election, the CPI(M) won 32 seats, and increased this to 33 seats in 1999. Although the CPI(M) and the CPI jointly identified the BJP’s defeat as their primary goal prior to the 1999 election, the left did not enter that election as a unified platform, as the Revolutionary Socialist Party and the Forward Bloc believed the left should also disavow association with Congress. In the 2004 general election, the CPI(M) won 43 Lok Sabha seats leading a unified Left Front, and subsequently extended external support to the Congress-led government.<sup>48</sup> The CPI(M) contested

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<sup>39</sup> Election Commission of India 2012, ‘Assembly Elections March 2012 Results’, Election Commission of India website, 7 March <http://eciresults.nic.in/> – Accessed 13 March 2012

<sup>40</sup> ‘Our President: Bahan Kumari Mayawati’ (undated), Bahujan Samaj Party website <http://www.bspindia.org/kumari-mayawati.php> – Accessed 9 March 2012

<sup>41</sup> ‘All India General Secretary BSP: Sri Satish Chandra Mishra’ (undated), Bahujan Samaj Party website [http://www.bspindia.org/satish\\_chandra\\_mishra.php](http://www.bspindia.org/satish_chandra_mishra.php) – Accessed 9 March 2012

<sup>42</sup> ‘BSP Leadership: Dr Suresh Mane’ (undated), Bahujan Samaj Party website <http://www.bspindia.org/suresh-mane.php> – Accessed 9 March 2012

<sup>43</sup> Election Commission of India 2011, ‘Notification No. 56/2011/PPS-II’, Election Commission of India website, 28 December [http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification\\_symbol\\_29122011.pdf](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification_symbol_29122011.pdf) - Accessed 15 March 2012

<sup>44</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Annex B

<sup>45</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>46</sup> ‘About Us’ (undated), Communist Party of India (Marxist) website <http://www.cpim.org/content/about-us> – Accessed 13 March 2012

<sup>47</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>48</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

the 2009 Lok Sabha election as part of the Third Front coalition, winning 16 seats.<sup>49</sup> The party has 15 members in the Rajya Sabha (Upper House).<sup>50</sup>

At the state level, the CPI(M)-led Left Front is in government in Tripura, with the CPI(M) holding 38 of the 41 Left Front seats in the 60 member Assembly. Manik Sarkar, a member of the CPI(M) politbureau, is the Chief Minister of Tripura.<sup>51</sup>

The CPI(M) led a Left Democratic Front alliance to victory over Congress in Kerala in 2006.<sup>52</sup> The CPI(M) won the highest number of seats in Kerala in the May 2011 Assembly elections when it obtained 45 seats,<sup>53</sup> but the Left Democratic Front lost government, holding 68 of 140 seats in the Assembly.<sup>54</sup>

In West Bengal, a Left Front government headed by the CPI(M) was in office from 1977 to May 2011, winning elections for seven consecutive terms.<sup>55</sup> In the May 2011 Assembly elections, the CPI(M) won only 40 out of 294 constituencies.<sup>56</sup>

Leaders: Prakash Karat (General Secretary),<sup>57</sup> Manik Sarkar (Chief Minister Tripura),<sup>58</sup> V.S. Achuthanandan (Leader of the Opposition in the Kerala Assembly),<sup>59</sup> S. Ramachandran Pillai (Politbureau member, President of the All India Kisan Sabha)<sup>60</sup>

The CPI(M) website is at <http://www.cpim.org/>

## **Communist Party of India (CPI)**

**Election Symbol:** Ears of Corn and Sickle<sup>61</sup>

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<sup>49</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Annex B

<sup>50</sup> 'About Us' (undated), Communist Party of India (Marxist) website

<http://www.cpim.org/content/about-us> – Accessed 13 March 2012

<sup>51</sup> 'State Governments' (undated), Communist Party of India (Marxist) website

<http://cpim.org/node/1338> – Accessed 13 March 2012

<sup>52</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>53</sup> Election Commission of India 2011, 'Assembly Elections May 2011 Results: Partywise Results', ECI website, 14 May <http://eciresults.nic.in/> – Accessed 24 February 2012

<sup>54</sup> 'State Governments' (undated), Communist Party of India (Marxist) website

<http://cpim.org/node/1338> – Accessed 13 March 2012

<sup>55</sup> 'State Governments' (undated), Communist Party of India (Marxist) website

<http://cpim.org/node/1338> – Accessed 13 March 2012

<sup>56</sup> Election Commission of India 2011, 'Assembly Elections May 2011 Results: Partywise Results', ECI website, 14 May <http://eciresults.nic.in/> – Accessed 24 February 2012

<sup>57</sup> 'Prakash Karat' (undated), Communist Party of India (Marxist) website <http://cpim.org/node/1544> – Accessed 13 March 2010

<sup>58</sup> 'State Governments' (undated), Communist Party of India (Marxist) website

<http://cpim.org/node/1338> – Accessed 13 March 2012

<sup>59</sup> 'V.S. Achuthanandan' (undated), Communist Party of India (Marxist) website

<http://cpim.org/node/1545> – Accessed 13 March 2012

<sup>60</sup> 'S. Ramachandran Pillai' (undated), Communist Party of India (Marxist) website

<http://cpim.org/node/1547> – Accessed 13 March 2012

<sup>61</sup> Election Commission of India 2011, 'Notification No. 56/2011/PPS-II', Election Commission of India website, 28 December

[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main/Electorallaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification\\_symbol\\_29122011.pdf](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/Electorallaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification_symbol_29122011.pdf) – Accessed 15 March 2012

The Communist Party of India (CPI) was formed in 1925 and advocates establishment of a socialist society led by the working class, and ultimately a communist society.<sup>62</sup> It was the largest opposition party in India after the country's first general election held in 1952. The majority of CPI members moved to the breakaway CPI-M when it was established in 1964, but the CPI retained most of the party bureaucracy, legislative representatives, and trade unionists. In 1980, supporters of former chair S. A. Dange founded the All India Communist Party, which was called the United Communist Party of India from 1989, after Dange's proposal to support the Congress (I) was rejected.<sup>63</sup>

In the 1999 Lok Sabha election, the CPI won four seats. It increased its representation to ten seats in the 2004 election, but this was reduced to four seats at the 2009 election,<sup>64</sup> which the party contested as part of the Third Front coalition.<sup>65</sup>

Leaders: A.B. Bardhan (General Secretary), S. Sudhakar Reddy (Deputy General Secretary), Shameem Faizee (National Council Secretary),<sup>66</sup> Gurudas Dasgupta (Leader in the Lok Sabha)<sup>67</sup>

The CPI website is at <http://www.communistparty.in/>

### **Nationalist Congress Party (NCP)**

**Election Symbol:** Clock<sup>68</sup>

The Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) was founded in May 1999 by three Congress members who had been expelled for proposing, in a direct affront to foreign-born Sonia Gandhi, a constitutional amendment allowing only "natural-born" Indian citizens to be the national president, vice president, or prime minister. The NCP absorbed the remnants of the Indian National Congress (Socialist) which originated in the anti-Gandhi Congress of 1977–1978.<sup>69</sup>

In the 1999 Lok Sabha election, the NCP won eight seats. In the 2004 election, the party was allied to Congress and won nine seats. In March 2004, a faction led by Purno Sangma left the party, mainly because of opposition to Sonia Gandhi as a prospective prime minister, and joined the All India Trinamul Congress. In December 2005, Sangma returned to the NCP. Another faction led by V. C. Shukla also broke

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<sup>62</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Annex B

<sup>63</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>64</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>65</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Annex B

<sup>66</sup> 'A Strong CPI is the Need of Hour – Draft Political Solution' 2012, Communist Party of India website, 24 January <http://cpixxicongress.blogspot.com.au/2012/01/we-are-introducing-political-draft.html#!http://cpixxicongress.blogspot.com/2012/01/we-are-introducing-political-draft.html> – Accessed 14 March 2012

<sup>67</sup> 'Detailed Profile: Shri Gurudas Dasgupta' (undated), National Portal of India website <http://india.gov.in/govt/loksabhambiodata.php?mpcode=4088> – Accessed 14 March 2012

<sup>68</sup> Election Commission of India 2011, 'Notification No. 56/2011/PPS-II', Election Commission of India website, 28 December [http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification\\_symbol\\_29122011.pdf](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification_symbol_29122011.pdf) - Accessed 15 March 2012

<sup>69</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at pp. 629-630



away in 2004. This faction formed the Rashtriya Janatantrik Dal, which subsequently merged with the BJP. In 2006, the Kerala-based Democratic Indira Congress - Karunakaran was absorbed by the NCP.<sup>70</sup>

In the 2009 Lok Sabha election, the NCP was a member of the United Progressive Alliance and won nine seats.<sup>71</sup> As at December 2011, the NCP had three ministers in the central government.<sup>72</sup>

In November 2009, 85% of the NCP's leadership in the state of Assam left the party to join the INC, citing dissatisfaction with the national leadership. During the same month, however, the NCP formed an alliance with the INC to govern the state of Maharashtra.<sup>73</sup>

Leaders: Sharad Pawar (President and Minister of Agriculture), Praful Patel (Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises), Y.P. Trivedi (Treasurer)<sup>7475</sup>

The NCP website is at <http://www.ncp.org.in/>

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<sup>70</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 630

<sup>71</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Annex B

<sup>72</sup> 'Nationalist Congress Party Central Ministers' 2011, Nationalist Congress Party website, 25 December [http://www.ncp.org.in/party/ncp\\_central\\_ministers.php](http://www.ncp.org.in/party/ncp_central_ministers.php) - Accessed 14 March 2012

<sup>73</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 630

<sup>74</sup> 'Nationalist Congress Party Central Ministers' 2011, Nationalist Congress Party website, 25 December [http://www.ncp.org.in/party/ncp\\_central\\_ministers.php](http://www.ncp.org.in/party/ncp_central_ministers.php) - Accessed 14 March 2012

<sup>75</sup> 'Nationalist Congress Party Office Bearers' 2011, Nationalist Congress Party website, 25 December [http://www.ncp.org.in/party/ncp\\_office\\_bearers.php](http://www.ncp.org.in/party/ncp_office_bearers.php) - Accessed 14 March 2012

### 3. State Political Parties

#### **Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) (Haryana)**

**Election Symbol:** Spectacles<sup>76</sup>

The Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) is based in the state of Haryana and was constituted in April 1998. The INLD website indicates that it “is dedicated to the all-round uplift of farmers, labourers, rural and urban areas and the downtrodden and the exploited.”<sup>77</sup>

The INLD is reported to have previously been named the Haryana Lok Dal (HLD), which was formed by Devi Lal in October 1996. The party campaigned as the HLD (Rashtriya), or HLD-R, after the HLD designation was appropriated by another political group. In the 1998 Lok Sabha election, the HLD-R allied with the BSP and won four Lok Sabha seats. It subsequently backed the Vajpayee government, but withdrew its support in February 1999 to protest subsidy cuts for food grains and fertilizer. By May 1999, the party was almost uniformly referred to as the INLD, and it won five seats in the 1999 general election.<sup>78</sup>

In July 1999, Devi Lal’s son, Om Prakash Chautala, returned as chief minister of Haryana, and at an early state election in February 2000, the INLD won a clear mandate. The BJP joined the Chautala administration as a junior partner. At the national level, prior to the 2004 general election, Chautala broke with the BJP and the INLD won no seats at the election. In the March 2005 state elections, the INLD, which had previously held 47 seats, won only nine seats and lost control of the 90-seat Haryana legislature.<sup>79</sup> In the 2009 Lok Sabha election, the INLD was part of the National Democratic Alliance, but did not win any seats,<sup>80</sup> failing to obtain any of Haryana’s ten Lok Sabha seats.<sup>81</sup>

Leaders: Om Parkash Chautala (National President), Ashok Kumar Arora (State President), Ajay Singh Chautala (State Secretary General)<sup>82</sup>

The INLD website is at <http://inld.in/index1.html>

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<sup>76</sup> Election Commission of India 2011, ‘Notification No. 56/2011/PPS-II’, (Election Commission of India website, 28 December

[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification\\_symbol\\_29122011.pdf](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification_symbol_29122011.pdf) - Accessed 15 March 2012

<sup>77</sup> ‘About INLD’ (undated), Indian National Lok Dal website <http://inld.in/about.html> – Accessed 14 March 2012

<sup>78</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>79</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>80</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Paragraph 3.12

<sup>81</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 633

<sup>82</sup> ‘Home’ (undated), Indian National Lok Dal website <http://inld.in/index1.html> – Accessed 14 March 2012

## **Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) (Punjab)**

**Election Symbol:** Scales<sup>83</sup>

The Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) is a Punjab-based party formed in 1920.<sup>84</sup> It is a Sikh party that contests elections nationally, but its influence is reported to be “confined primarily to Punjab, where it campaigns against excessive federal influence in Sikh affairs.”<sup>85</sup>

The party supported the demand for an independent Sikh state, but this demand was dropped after the Punjab peace accord of 1985.<sup>86</sup> In 1986, a number of Akali Dal leaders, including former chief minister Parkash Singh Badal, formed a separate party, but the party reunited in 1987 under Simranjit Singh Mann. There was persisting factionalism,<sup>87</sup> and by the early 1990s, the Akali Dal had fragmented into a number of factions, arguing for varying degrees of sovereignty and/or integration within federal India.<sup>88</sup>

In 1994-1995, the Sikh religious leadership attempted to unify the party, with six of the more distinctly non-secular factions adopting an “Amritsar declaration”, but Mann asserted other party leaders were not abiding by the declaration, and subsequently formed the Shiromani Akali Dal (Mann).<sup>89</sup> The SAD formed an alliance with the BJP in 1997,<sup>90</sup> and in mid-1999 Gurcharan Singh Tohra, who had been critical of the BJP-led central government and Badal’s Punjab administration, established the All India Shiromani Akali Dal (AISAD). In the 1999 Lok Sabha election, the SAD lost six of its eight Lok Sabha seats,<sup>91</sup> and in 2002, it lost the Punjab state election.<sup>92</sup> Tohra and Badal reconciled in 2003, but after Tohra’s death in March 2004, a new anti-Badal All India Shiromani Akali Dal was organised by Jaswant Singh Mann, one of several minor SAD formations.<sup>93</sup>

The SAD was a member of the NDA at the 2004 general election and won eight seats. Another anti-Badal offshoot, the Shiromani Akali Dal (Longowal) was formed under Prem Singh Chandumajra shortly afterwards, but in January 2007, he re-joined the parent party. In February 2007, the SAD won the Punjab State election in alliance

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<sup>83</sup> Election Commission of India 2011, ‘Notification No. 56/2011/PPS-II’, Election Commission of India website, 28 December

[http://eci.nic.in/eci\\_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification\\_symbol\\_29122011.pdf](http://eci.nic.in/eci_main/ElectoralLaws/OrdersNotifications/Notification_symbol_29122011.pdf) - Accessed 15 March 2012

<sup>84</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Annex B

<sup>85</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 632

<sup>86</sup> UK Home Office 2009, *Country of Origin Information Report – India*, 12 May, Annex B

<sup>87</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 632

<sup>88</sup> Fair, C. 2005, ‘Diaspora involvement in insurgencies: Insights from the Khalistan and Tamil Eelam movements’, *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics*, vol. 11, p. 151

[http://home.comcast.net/~christine\\_fair/pubs/Diasporas.pdf](http://home.comcast.net/~christine_fair/pubs/Diasporas.pdf) – Accessed 21 April 2009

<sup>89</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 632

<sup>90</sup> UK Home Office 2009, *Country of Origin Information Report – India*, 12 May, Annex B

<sup>91</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 632

<sup>92</sup> UK Home Office 2009, *Country of Origin Information Report – India*, 12 May, Annex B

<sup>93</sup> ‘India’ in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 632

with the BJP, and Badal reclaimed the chief ministership. In the 2009 Lok Sabha election, Badal's SAD won four Lok Sabha seats as part of the NDA.<sup>94 95</sup>

In the March 2012 Assembly election in Punjab, the SAD won 56 seats<sup>96</sup> and formed government with the BJP. Parkash Singh Badal became the Chief Minister of Punjab for the fifth time.<sup>97</sup>

Leaders: Parkash Singh Badal (Chief Minister Punjab),<sup>98</sup> Sukhbir Singh Badal (President), Sukhdev Singh Dhindsa (Secretary General)<sup>99</sup>

The Shiromani Akali Dal website is at <http://www.shiromaniakalidal.org.in/>

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<sup>94</sup> 'India' in Muller, T.C., Overstreet, W.R., Isacoff, J.F. & Lansdorf, T. (eds) 2011, *Political Handbook of the World 2011*, CQ Press, Washington DC, pp. 622-640, at p. 632

<sup>95</sup> UK Home Office 2011, *India Country of Origin Information (COI) Report*, 26 August, Paragraph 3.12

<sup>96</sup> Election Commission of India 2012, 'Assembly Elections March 2012 Results', Election Commission of India website, 7 March <http://ecireresults.nic.in/> – Accessed 13 March 2012

<sup>97</sup> 'Parkash Singh Badal Elected Leader of SAD-BJP Legislative Party' 2012, Shiromani Akali Dal website, 10 March <http://www.shiromaniakalidal.org.in/2012/parkash-singh-badal-elected-leader-of-sad-bjp-legislative-party/> – Accessed 14 March 2012

<sup>98</sup> 'Parkash Singh Badal Elected Leader of SAD-BJP Legislative Party' 2012, Shiromani Akali Dal website, 10 March <http://www.shiromaniakalidal.org.in/2012/parkash-singh-badal-elected-leader-of-sad-bjp-legislative-party/> – Accessed 14 March 2012

<sup>99</sup> 'Organisation Structure' (undated), Shiromani Akali Dal website <http://www.shiromaniakalidal.org.in/akali-dal-organisation-structure/> – Accessed 14 March 2012

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